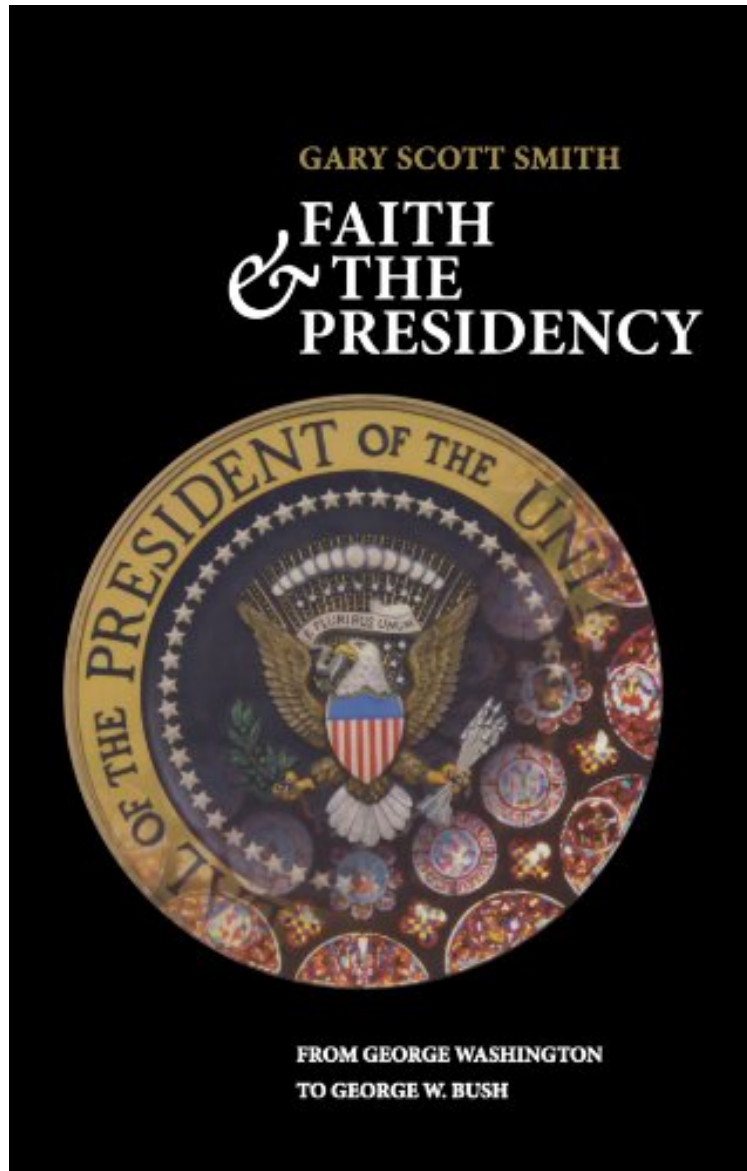


[Read now] Faith and the Presidency From George Washington to George W. Bush

Faith and the Presidency From George Washington to George W. Bush

Gary Scott Smith

audiobook / *ebooks / Download PDF / ePub / DOC



DOWNLOAD



+

READ ONLINE

#72530 in Books Smith Gary Scott 2009-07-17Original language:EnglishPDF # 1 5.70 x 1.80 x 8.901, 2.06
#File Name: 0195395964680 pagesFaith and the Presidency From George Washington to George W Bush |
File size: 65.Mb

Gary Scott Smith : Faith and the Presidency From George Washington to George W. Bush before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Faith and the Presidency From George Washington to George W. Bush:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Thorough treatment of 11 Presidents' religious viewsBy HHHFrom the subtitle of this book, one might judge that this large book is a sweep of all the U.S. presidents from George Washington to George W. Bush. But that would be a mistake. Gary Scott Smith focuses on only eleven presidents, just three of whom governed before the 20th century. Washington, Jefferson, and Lincoln are certainly to be expected in any treatment of American politics and religion. And the same is true of most of the remaining eight. But if the choices are predictable, Smith's treatment is not. "Thorough" is the word that first comes to mind, as Smith provides over 200 pages of detailed notes that constitute a kind of running bibliography for the subject at hand. In addition to being bibliographic, the notes are also often explanatory, at whatever length the author deems appropriate. It would be difficult to imagine greater help being given to the reader than these extensive notes regularly provide. On the other hand, Smith is so careful to present all the major viewpoints (with ample quotations) concerning his eleven subjects that he scarcely leaves time for his own analysis. The reader, moreover, may feel that he is being offered a sumptuous buffet, but that ultimately the choice of which food to accept and which to reject is up to him. On G.W., for example, Smith writes: "Washington's religious views were shaped by parents, his half-brother Lawrence, the teachings and practices of the Episcopal Church, the ideas of the Enlightenment, the tenets of Freemasonry, his wife, Martha, and his military and political experiences" (p. 26). This explains everything and nothing. The author needs to guide, not merely report. Similarly, with respect to Jefferson, Smith recreates the third president's social and intellectual milieu, but leaves many choices for the reader. "Examining Jefferson's religious socialization," Smith writes, "pattern of church attendance, approach toward worship and prayer, the thinkers who shaped his worldview, and his views of God, Jesus, human nature, morality, education, life after death, and the Bible provides insight into his life and his presidency" (p. 55). Now, admittedly, these all-inclusive generalities are followed by much more specific data -- in Jefferson's case, e.g., by a reference to the "metaphysical insanities" of Athanasius (p. 59) or to the "unlettered and ignorant men" who had turned the simple teachings of Jesus into unintelligible mishmash (p. 65). In these and other instances, however, concerning Smith's exposition, less would have been more. In the 20th century, Smith elaborates the religious views of Theodore Roosevelt, Woodrow Wilson, FDR, Dwight D. Eisenhower, JFK, Jimmy Carter, and Ronald Reagan. At this point, George W. Bush has the the 21st century all to himself. Many gems are offered along the way: for example, Eisenhower's first name owes something to the popularity when he was born of the revivalist Dwight L. Moody. Kennedy, having fought off Protestant attacks and slanders, only to be put through the wringer by fellow Catholics, observed that he now understood why Henry VIII decided to create his own church. (Incidentally, Kennedy appears to have been motivated less by a personal faith than the others, but as the first Catholic president of a heretofore "Protestant nation," he could hardly be left out.) Carter's piety was rejected because it called for "sacrifice and self-denial"; Reagan's piety, on the other hand, was embraced because of its sunny optimism -- Reagan (in Garry Wills's words) offering a "more marketable God" (p. 361). Smith has given us much to ponder and much to be grateful for. In the future, historians of America will not be able to tackle the subject of "faith and the presidency" without first tackling this imposing and informative volume.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent research and full of facts and interesting material on ...By ShellyThis book written by a college professor from Grove City College. Excellent research and full of facts and interesting material on the presidents covered. This is part of a series on presidents in the White House. If you like history you will enjoy this series as they come out.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy William C. RussellGreat book--great job of writing--good service.

In the wake of the 2004 election, pundits were shocked at exit polling that showed that 22% of voters thought 'moral values' was the most important issue at stake. People on both sides of the political divide believed this was the key to victory for George W. Bush, who professes a deep and abiding faith in God. While some fervent Bush supporters see him as a man chosen by God for the White House, opponents see his overt commitment to Christianity as a dangerous and unprecedented bridging of the gap between church and state. In fact, Gary Scott Smith shows, none of this is new. Religion has been a major part of the presidency since George Washington's first inaugural address. Despite the mounting interest in the role of religion in American public life, we actually know remarkably little about the faith of our presidents. Was Thomas Jefferson an atheist, as his political opponents charged? What role did Lincoln's religious views play in his handling of slavery and the Civil War? How did born-again Southern Baptist Jimmy Carter lose the support of many evangelicals? Was George W. Bush, as his critics often claimed, a captive of the religious right? In this fascinating book, Smith answers these questions and many more. He takes a sweeping look at the role religion has played in presidential politics and policies. Drawing on extensive archival research, Smith paints compelling portraits of the religious lives and presidencies of eleven chief executives for whom religion was particularly important. Faith and the Presidency meticulously examines what each of its subjects believed and how those beliefs shaped their presidencies and, in turn, the course of our history.

"Wonderfully informed...one could do far worse than approach his text as an alternative biographical portrait of certain chief executives. But he does such a fantastic job of explicating the Presidents' career trajectories by means of their religious convictions that the book is in fact far more than this." --Journal of American Studies" At a time when presses

(and readers) groan under the weight of panicky punditry on religion and the presidency, it is a welcome relief to possess Smith's well-researched, balanced and fair-minded study of a perennially interesting topic." --Christian Century

About the Author Gary Scott Smith chairs the History Department and coordinates the Humanities Core at Grove City College where he has taught since 1978. He is the author or editor of six books, including *God and Politics: Four Views on the Reformation of Civil Government* (1989) and *The Search for Social Salvation: Social Christianity and America, 1880-1925* (2000).